

VZCZCXRO0551
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHTRO
DE RUEHDIR #0331/01 2241218
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 121218Z AUG 09
FM RPO DUBAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0489
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHDIR/RPO DUBAI 0490

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 RPO DUBAI 000331

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/12/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [SOCI](#) [TSPL](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IRAN REGIONAL PRESENCE OFFICE DUBAI: WINDOWN ON IRAN-AUGUST
12, 2009

DUBAI 00000331 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Timothy Richardson, Acting Director, Iran
Regional Presence Office, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (S) Shahroudi's Term Approaches its End: An IRPO contact with indirect access to senior Iranian officials told us that Judiciary Chief Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi was leaving his office frustrated that he had been unable to make significant changes to strengthen Iran's justice system. Shahroudi will step down August 15 after 10 years in the post. Although Shahroudi is no reformer, he has maintained the independence of the judiciary, especially when the Ahmadinejad administration overstepped its bounds, and more recently in ordering release of many of those arrested in post-election protests. Our contact told us that during a vigorous debate with one of Shahroudi's relatives over election fraud, Shahroudi's relative maintained that the election had been fair and in support of his argument disclosed that Shahroudi had even voted for Mousavi because of Ahmadinejad's reckless regard for the law. Comment: Shahroudi has given no public indication that he has supported the opposition, but this anecdote does raise the possibility that Mousavi's unsuccessful efforts to find some judicial remedy to the election results indicated that the opposition saw Shahroudi as at least impartial, and perhaps even sympathetic to its claims.

12. (C) Contacts Paint Wide-ranging Election Day Picture: Eight weeks after the election, IRPO contacts from Dubai and Iran unanimously maintain that Ahmadinejad benefitted from a rigged election, but we are no surer now of the scale of the fraud or its mechanism than we were on June 13. We have not heard a consistent narrative about the election, nor any corroborating evidence that would conclusively support one version over another. Some recount how many first-time voters turned out to oppose Ahmadinejad and claim Mousavi won nearly 60 percent of the vote while others, even participants in the post-election protests, believe Ahmadinejad actually won the election but by a much smaller margin than the official tally. We have heard both that the IRIG made up the ballot numbers on the spot after realizing Mousavi was winning and also that the fraud was an elaborate scheme initiated weeks in advance, with fake ballots filled out ahead of time, hidden in Pakistan to prevent their discovery, and flown back to Iran the night of the election to replace the real ballots. Given that our contacts generally reflect a narrow segment of the population, the rumors circulating among the broader population probably are even more fabulous and contradictory. IRPO considers the wide-ranging theories notable for two reasons. First, the various versions of the truth underscore the difficulty in ascertaining what actually happened during election day in large part because of

the absence of independent Iranian media and restrictions immediately placed on the hundreds of foreign reporters accredited to cover the elections. And as long as this government is in power, it is unlikely we will ever get a complete account of what happened. Second, the failure of a consistent, compelling narrative to develop among those opposed to Ahmadinejad's re-election perhaps reflects the nature of the opposition itself. The multitude of theories suggest the opposition movement is loosely organized and informed more by rumors spread by word of mouth and Twitter feeds. Without a strong leadership that can make its case based on facts and focus its message to refute the government's elaborate conspiracies of Western interference, the opposition will continue to struggle in maximizing domestic and international support for its efforts.

13. (C) Election Changes View of Iranian Nuclear Program: A young Iranian woman from Shiraz in Dubai seeking refugee status in the West (see RPODubai 327 for a description of her situation) commented that like all Iranians, she supports her country's right to nuclear power. However, she attached a notable caveat: she no longer trusts Iran's leadership to wield nuclear power responsibly and currently does not support the program. She said that although her sentiments are unique, when she explains her argument to other Iranians, they now agree with her. Comment: Clearly, a woman seeking refugee status is biased against her government; her views should not be considered representative of the Iranian population writ large, as she said herself. However, the fraudulent presidential election and the IRIG's violent repression of the post-election protests have diminished the government's legitimacy among significant chunks of the Iranian people, perhaps leaving many willing to reconsider their support for Iran's nuclear program.

14. (C) Professor Says Effects of Drought Still Linger~: An
DUBAI 00000331 002.2 OF 002

assistant professor of climatology at Imam Khomeini University said that Iran's aquifers and rivers are still below what they should be after years of drought. As a result, agriculture is still suffering. His account is consistent with recent press reports regarding Iran's reduced water tables and rising beef prices due to the drought's effects on cattle herd sizes. Comment: The professor is traveling to the US to research the effects of climate change on Iran's climate and the likelihood of more frequent droughts. His trip, along with a recent exchange program on soil and water conservation for Iranian agriculture experts, suggest that irrigation and water management can be area of collaboration between American and Iranian scientists or the USG and IRIG directly as a means to build trust in non-political areas.

15. (C)~and Describes Importance of Western Research to Promotion: He said that in order to become a full professor, it was necessary to spend a year doing research in a prominent Western university. He rattled off several US universities that he deemed worthy and noted that some universities in the UK and Australia are also sufficient. He said this list and the necessity of such time abroad was more an unwritten rule rather than official policy. Imam Khomeini University, which is providing financial support while he is in the US, offers such research sabbaticals to faculty members as a reward for research. The assistant professor described a point system based largely on written research by which faculty can earn the opportunity to do research abroad. In contrast to some reports that Iranian academics need separate government authorization to do research abroad, the professor said that only approval from one's university is necessary. Comment: The system for research abroad creates incentives for Iranian professors to do ever more research and seems to be one area where Western

influence and cooperation is welcome, at least as long as it fits the government's objectives in pushing Iran's level of science and technological development forward.

RICHARDSON